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EXECUTIVE BRANCH

White House releases budget blueprint; calls for cuts to DOE

ECA Staff

March 16, 2017

The White House realeased its "skinny budget" today, outlining President Trump's vision for fiscal year 2018. The budget is considered to be a "blueprint" as it contains only top-line numbers. It requests $28B for DOE, a $1.7 B or 5.6% decrease from the 2017 annualized CR level. It also provides a $1.4B (11%) increase above the 2017 CR level for NNSA.

The document states that the proposed budget:

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 2017

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House Nuclear Cleanup Caucus Event
Washington, DC

June 2017

- **Provides $120 million to restart licensing activities for the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository and initiate a robust interim storage program.** These investments would accelerate progress on fulfilling the Federal Government's obligations to address nuclear waste, enhance national security, and reduce future taxpayer burden.

- **Supports the goals of moving toward a responsive nuclear infrastructure and advancing the existing program** of record for warhead life extension programs through elimination of defense sequestration **for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA).**

- **Enables NNSA to begin to address its critical infrastructure maintenance backlog.**

- Protects human health and the environment by **providing $6.5 billion to advance the Environmental Management program mission of cleaning up the legacy of waste and contamination from energy research and nuclear weapons production**, including addressing excess facilities to support modernization of the nuclear security enterprise.

- Eliminates the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, the Title 17 Innovative Technology Loan Guarantee Program, and the Advanced Technology Vehicle Manufacturing Program because the private sector is better positioned to finance disruptive energy research and development and to commercialize innovative technologies.

- **Ensures the Office of Science continues to invest in the highest priority basic science and energy research and development** as well as operation and maintenance of existing scientific facilities for the community. This includes a savings of approximately $900 million compared to the 2017 annualized CR level.

- **Focuses funding for** the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, **the Office of Nuclear Energy**, the Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability, and the Fossil Energy Research and Development program **on limited, early-stage applied energy research and development activities where the Federal role is stronger.** In addition, the Budget eliminates the Weatherization Assistance Program and the State Energy Program to reduce Federal intervention in State-level energy policy and implementation. Collectively, these changes achieve a savings of approximately $2 billion from the 2017 annualized CR level.

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House Nuclear Cleanup Caucus Event
Washington, DC

August 2017

8-9

Intermountain Energy Summitt
Idaho Falls, ID

More info here

August 2017

16-17

INVITATION ONLY

ECA Peer Exchange: Implementation of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park
Richland, WA

September 2017

12-14

2017 National Cleanup Workshop
Alexandria, VA

More info here

- Supports the Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability's capacity to carry out cybersecurity and grid resiliency activities that would help harden and evolve critical grid infrastructure that the American people and the economy rely upon.

- **Continues the necessary research, development, and construction to support the Navy's current nuclear fleet and enhance the capabilities of the future fleet.**

The President does not get the final say in the appropriations process. While this budget blueprint may set the tone of the conversation on Capitol Hill, Republican energy and water spending cardinals Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID) will be major influencers in the process. Any final spending bill for FY18 will also have to secure 60 votes in the Senate to overcome Democratic filibuster. **>>View the budget here**

STORAGE & DISPOSITION

Attempts to revive Yucca Mountain project will cost feds $1.66B, Nevada director reports

Las Vegas Review Journal

March 13, 2017

CARSON CITY — Nevada will continue to fight any attempt to restart the Yucca Mountain project as the site to bury the nation's high-level radio active waste, and supporters should walk away from the moribund effort, a state official told state lawmakers on Monday.

Bob Halstead, in a budget presentation from the Nevada Agency for Nuclear Projects, said the state will contest 218 elements in any Department of Energy license application, with another 30 to 50 challenges anticipated based on new information.

The contentions cover areas including site suitability, the disposal concept, groundwater impacts and transportation issues.

Nevada officials estimate that a licensing hearing would require over 400 days, taking an estimated four to five years at a cost to the DOE $1.66 billion. **>>Continue reading**

Opinion: We May Need A Separate Deep Geologic Repository For Our Nuclear Weapons Waste

September 2017

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House Nuclear Cleanup Caucus Event
Washington, DC

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Forbes

March 13, 2017

The United States Department of Energy released a Draft Plan for a Defense Waste Repository for public comment on December 16, 2016. The Defense Waste Repository would only be for nuclear waste generated from our production of nuclear weapons and includes both categories of weapons waste – high-level waste (HLW) and transuranic waste (TRU).

And so begins our Nation's attempt to get back to science with respect to our nuclear waste disposal program. Meaning, let's find the right rock in the right place and a community willing to take it. Separating defense from commercial waste is reasonable as they are quite different in form.

Commercial nuclear waste is not actually a waste but a solid easily-handled material that can be reused in the future and is easily and safely stored in dry casks for over 160 years. Defense waste is actually waste, not useful at all, and is the goopy peanut-butter-like junk, as well as trash, sludge, cement and salt cake, that one associates with nasty waste types.

So dispose of the actual waste and keep the useful spent fuel until we can use it in our new reactors when they come online. Or we can also dispose of it in the future if we do not use it as it will be a lot cooler and cheaper to dispose. **>>Continue reading**

LANL seeks permission to store more nuclear waste on-site

The New Mexican

March 12, 2017

LOS ALAMOS — Los Alamos National Laboratory wants to store thousands of gallons of newly generated radioactive waste for an indefinite number of years, possibly decades, on laboratory property that is primarily used for plutonium research and nuclear weapons development.

The lab in January asked the state for permission to modify its 2010 hazardous waste permit in order to use two waste rooms and an outdoor storage pad near the lab's plutonium facility to hold 1,700 waste drums, or 95,000 gallons, of radiologically contaminated materials — enough to fill six backyard swimming pools.

The new waste would join millions of gallons of radioactive waste and other hazardous

contaminants stored in shallow pits and above ground throughout the lab's 43-square-mile property, some of it dating back to the Manhattan Project. The request underscores the nuclear weapons industry's continuing struggle to find places to dispose of its growing stockpiles of radioactive waste, an endeavor that was set back in part by the nearly three-year closure of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in Southern New Mexico. An improperly packaged waste drum from the lab burst in an underground chamber in February 2014, causing a radiation leak. **>>Continue reading**

NEW NUCLEAR

NuScale Power, LLC Design Accepted for Review by U.S. NRC

NuScale Press Release

March 15, 2017

PORTLAND, OR -- NuScale Power, LLC announced today they received notification that NuScale's first-ever Small Modular Reactor (SMR) Design Certification Application (DCA) was accepted for review by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). By accepting the DCA for review, the NRC staff is confirming that NuScale's submission addresses all NRC requirements and contains sufficient technical information to conduct the review. NuScale marked a major milestone on December 31, 2016 when the company asked the NRC to approve the SMR design, the first submitted in the United States.

"This is a great next step for a new American nuclear technology and a step we see as affirming NuScale as a true leader in SMR technology development," NuScale CEO John Hopkins said. "The uncommon fact that the NRC was able to accept our application during the 60-day docketing review period is validation of all of our hard work over the past eight years." **>>Continue reading**

GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy and ARC Nuclear Announce Cooperation to Accelerate Commercialization of Advanced Small Modular Reactor

Yahoo Finance

March 13, 2017

GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy (GEH) and Advanced Reactor Concepts LLC (ARC Nuclear) have agreed to collaborate in the development and licensing of an advanced small modular reactor (aSMR) based on mature Generation IV sodium-cooled reactor technology.

In a Memorandum of Understanding, the two companies have agreed to enter into a procompetitive collaboration to progress a joint aSMR design for global power generation with initial deployment in Canada. The companies will pursue a preliminary regulatory review by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission through its Vendor Design Review process, building on earlier technology licensing success in the United States. This collaborative commercialization program also includes the near-term goals of confirming projected construction and operating costs, as well as the identification of a lead-plant owner/operator for the joint aSMR. **>>Continue reading**

Bechtel And BWXT Quietly Terminate mPower Reactor Project

Forbes

March 13, 2017

Generation mPower, one of the early leaders in the development of small modular reactors (SMR), has decided to fully terminate its partnership and put the design material that was developed onto a corporate shelf. Though this isn't specifically good nuclear news, it is an indication that nuclear energy development has many hurdles that it shares with all other fields of technology development.

It's challenging, expensive, usually takes longer than expected, requires focus, subject to changing situations and even when substantial resources are available and invested, failure – or giving up – is always both a risk and an option. **>>Continue reading**